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**PacPro/Agrokasa offer enhanced service model**

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Peruvian grower-shipper Agrokasa and its U.S. sales division Pacific Produce (PacPro) LLC implemented a grove-to-retailer service this year that proved highly successful and will be offered to others next year.

Isabel Tavera, vice president/sales director for PacPro, revealed that the service was trialed on one container with one retailer in 2022. For 2023, it has been expanded to 30-40 containers to that same retailer.

“We call the program Delta Avocado and it is a ‘technical sell,’” Tavera said. “We work with the customer from the grove to the store.”

She said the service requires season-long commitments on both ends of the transaction with regard to numbers and an FOB price, and transparency from the supplier and the buyer. Tavera believes that for Peru to be a successful avocado supplying partner for the United States buyer community, program buys and firm commitments are crucial. “Peru is not Mexico. We can’t just switch our volume off and on,” she said. “We need commitments and they must be honored.”

She noted that in 2022, U.S. buyers needed Peru’s fruit because of a shorter-than-expected Mexico crop and Peru performed well sending record shipments to the United States. This year, Peru was expected to again break its volume record, but that forecast was recently decreased by the Peruvian avocado grower group. Now they are projecting zero growth for shipments to the United States.

It could have been a big year. Tavera said Mexico has had size issues all season and Peru is noted for its larger fruit, but Peruvian exporters only sent program fruit to the U.S. market because of the uncertainty of the buyer community sticking with Peru. She added that many buyers only use Peru for convenience.

Tavera said that Europe also has had a very strong marketing situation this year and their commitment to Peru makes that a better choice for most of Peru’s avocado grower-shippers. “Agrokasa sends 80 to 90 percent of its volume to Europe with tons of success,” she revealed.

Tavera would like to see U.S. customers commit to a specific percentage each year and stick to it. “We need to work together with buyers to help make us a success,” she said.

Delta Avocado was clearly designed with that goal in mind. “If the customer gives Peruvian avocado suppliers a real opportunity, we will all be successful,” she said. “We need reciprocity.”

Tavera said the Delta Avocado program worked very well this year. “We are very happy and proud with our performances,” she said. “Both sides worked very well together. Good communications and being patient were key.”

She said both the grower and the retailer had teams dedicated to this project and communicated often. “We saw great results,” she reiterated.

For its committed U.S. customers, Tavera said PacPro will have supplies until mid-October, with

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plenty of large sizes.

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